

**Do not hesitate to contact your Physician or
Public Health Department Nurse if you are
concerned or have questions.**

*Panhandle Health District offices
are ready to serve you in each
of the five northern counties
of Idaho*

Kootenai County
8500 N. Atlas Road
Hayden ID 83835
208 415-5100

Bonner County
1020 Michigan
Sandpoint ID 83864
208 263-5159

Boundary County
7402 Caribou
Bonners Ferry ID 83805
208 267-5558

Benewah County
711 Jefferson
St. Maries ID 83861
208 245-4556

Shoshone County
114 W Riverside
Kellogg ID 83837
208 786-7474

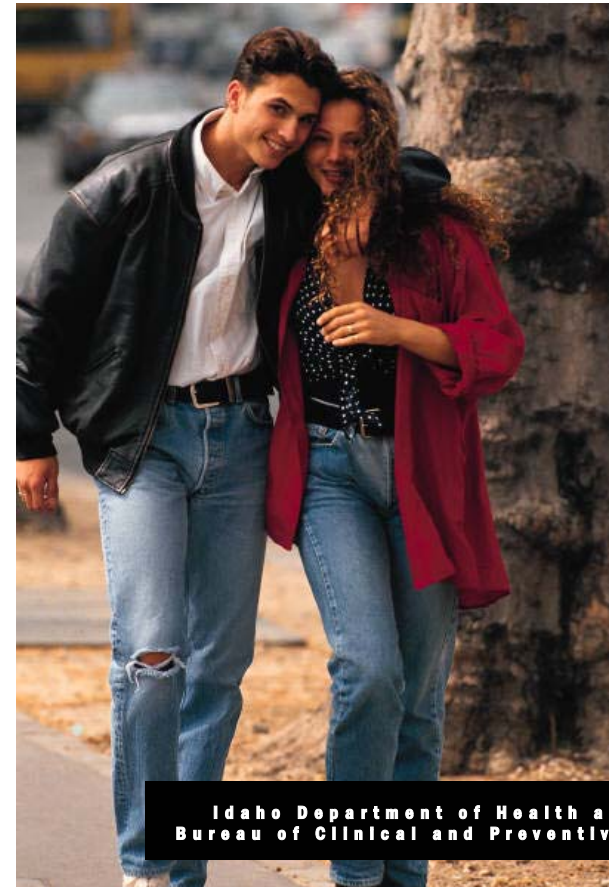


Panhandle Health District
Healthy People in Healthy Communities
www2.state.id.us/phd1

May 2006

Idaho Reproductive Health Program

Genital Warts



**Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
Bureau of Clinical and Preventive Services**

General reference: Contraceptive Technology: 17th Rev. Ed., 1998 and Contraceptive Updates 2000-2003

Genital Warts

Genital warts are a Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) caused by certain types of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and is one of the most common causes of sexually transmitted infection in the world. The most common areas where warts grow are on the penis, in and around the vagina and the cervix (opening of the womb) and around the anus. Warts found on the hands and feet are not caused by the same virus as genital warts.

How Do You Get Genital Warts?

The virus that causes genital warts, HPV, is spread by direct contact with infected skin or warts during sexual activity. Some people with HPV grow visible warts, but most do not. It is possible to be infected with HPV for months or years without any signs or symptoms. HPV can be passed to a sex partner even when no actual warts are present.

What Do Genital Warts Look Like?

Warts usually appear as raised bumps that are the same color as the surrounding skin. They can be smooth or rough on top. Some warts appear almost flat on the skin.

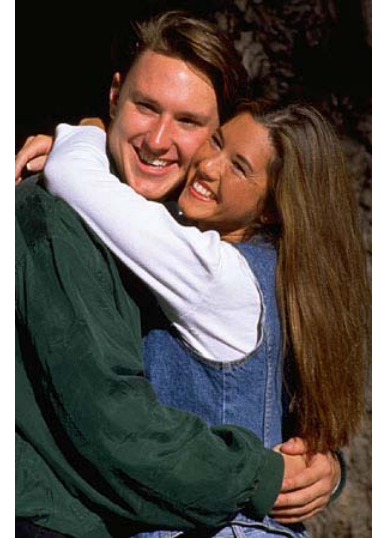


Are Genital Warts Serious?

For most people, genital warts are just a bother and are only treated for comfort or cosmetic reasons. Treatment options may be discussed with your doctor or nurse. In women, different kinds of HPV can cause changes in the cells of the cervix. In some cases, these abnormal cells can lead to cancer. Pap smears are recommended for all women to check for abnormal cells.

What To Do If Genital Warts Are Present

- For some people, genital warts will go away on their own.
- A health care provider can remove warts by using liquid nitrogen or other methods. Home treatments are also available by prescription.
- It often takes several treatments for the warts to go away. Warts may return, even after treatment. This is because the virus can stay in the skin even if no warts are visible.
- **IMPORTANT:** Over the counter (non-prescription) wart treatments should not be used in, on or around the genital or anal areas.



How Can I Avoid Getting Genital Warts

Abstinence (not having sex) is the only sure way to avoid infection. Plan ahead: Think about protecting yourself. Talk about STDs and the need to protect yourself with your sex partner(s). Using a male condom with each sex partner may lower the chance of infection when the condom covers the infected area(s).

HIV IS ALSO AN STD!

When you get infected with HPV, you could also be getting HIV. Birth control pills or a birth control shot cannot protect you against HPV or other STDs. Using condoms correctly every time you have sex can protect you from HIV and other STDs.